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**CC:**  
**Subject:** NRDC blog: Blog: Is Dimock's Water Really Safe? One Federal Health Agency Is Not So Sure

Blog: Is Dimock's Water Really Safe? One Federal Health Agency Is Not So Sure It looks like the federal government is still concerned about the water in Dimock, PA. Although it's been a few months since the EPA declared Dimock drinking water "safe" despite potentially explosive levels of methane it found in the water of several Dimock homes, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) recently confirmed that it is continuing to investigate the potential long term exposure risks of showering, drinking, bathing, and washing with Dimock water. The ATSDR—an independent agency under the Department of Health and Human Services and the principal federal public health agency involved with hazardous waste issues—began investigating water quality late last year, shortly after the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) allowed the Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation to stop daily deliveries of fresh water to local residents. DEP had previously determined that Cabot was responsible for contaminating Dimock water with methane from its fracking operations, and tests conducted by both DEP and Cabot had shown that the water also contained pollutants like arsenic; barium; bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, a plasticizer commonly called DEHP; glycol compounds, manganese, phenol, and sodium. ATSDR's initial report from December 2011 expressed concerns about the reliability of methane removal systems offered by Cabot to Dimock residents as part of a settlement agreement with DEP, and "the presence of other contaminants besides methane (metals, volatile organics and non-naturally occurring organics) for which the well treatment systems are not designed or in place to address." That report also recommended that: A full public health evaluation should be conducted on the data from the site area. Because many of these compounds (e.g., metals) affect the same organ systems, ATSDR recommends evaluating the mixture for public health impacts using computational techniques or other suitable methods to evaluate the potential for synergistic actions: The cumulative concentration of all dissolved combustible gases should be considered to protect against the buildup of explosive atmospheres in all wells in the area. According to this recommendation, the agency is continuing to pursue "a fairly comprehensive review" of Dimock water quality, which will include review of earlier tests conducted by DEP and Cabot as well as EPA's recent test results. There is currently no timeframe for the completion of the report. Regardless of what the eventual outcome of the ATSDR investigation will be, one thing remains uncontested by anyone but the gas industry—Cabot's drilling activities contaminated Dimock drinking water. Thankfully, at least one government agency is devoting the time and resources to determine whether that water still poses an ongoing threat to the health of Dimock residents.

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